1 Opening of the 38th Annual Meeting

1.1 The President, Jacques Verborgh, European Union, opened the meeting. All Contracting Parties were represented.

2 Welcome address by the President and opening statements

2.1 The President made an opening address. Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland), the European Union, Iceland, Norway and the Russian Federation made opening statements. Opening statements were also made by observers from Cooperating non-Contracting Parties (Bahamas, Liberia and Panama), intergovernmental organisations (FAO, IMO and OSPAR) and Non-Governmental Organisations (Marine Stewardship Council and Deep Sea Conservation Coalition and Seas at Risk).

3 Adoption of the agenda and appointment of rapporteur

3.1 The agenda was adopted in the form that had been circulated before the meeting (document AM 2019-01), with the addition of three items under AOB.

3.2 The Secretary was appointed as rapporteur.
4 Establishment and arrangements for the Finance and Administration Committee (FAC), and other groups

4.1 Arrangements were made for FAC, the Permanent Committee on Monitoring and Compliance (PECMAC) and the Permanent Committee on Management and Science (PECMAS) to meet in the margins of the meeting.

5 Status of the amended NEAFC Convention

5.1 The Secretary presented a report by the depository government on the status of the amended NEAFC Convention, document AM 2019-03 Rev.1.

5.2 The Secretary explained that the report from the depository government stated that the situation remained unchanged regarding the entry into force of the amendments to the Convention. The 2006 amendment had entered into force in 2013. The amendment adopted in 2004 would not enter into force unless the Contracting Party which had lodged an objection to the amendment would lift that objection.

5.3 The Russian Federation thanked the Secretariat for the update and confirmed that its objection had not been lifted and the process regarding ratification of the amendment continued domestically. There would be an update in due course.

6 Report from the Working Group on Fisheries Statistics, WGSTATS

6.1 The Chair of WGSTATS, Thorsteinn Hilmarsson, Iceland, presented the work of the group. He noted that the group had held one meeting in 2019.

6.2 In reporting on the group’s last meeting, (as set out in document AM 2019-25), the Chair explained that a regular routine had now been established and the statistical process was running as it should with data being uploaded directly to the NEAFC database by Contracting Parties. A lock down for data following the Annual Meeting had also been agreed. Furthermore, the Chair presented a proposal from the working group to amend annex I in the Recommendation 2:2011 Monthly Statistics, by establishing a stock code of XOS (other species) for the stocks under Annex 1C of the Scheme (document AM 2019-58 Rev.1).

6.3 The Annual Meeting noted the report of the WGSTATS meeting, and thanked the Chair for the excellent work of the working group and its comprehensive report. The proposal to amend Recommendation 2:2011 Monthly Statistics, as in AM 2019-58 Rev.1, was adopted.

7 Statistics on quota uptake and vessel activity

7.1 The tables containing final catch statistics for 2018 as presented in document AM 2019-26 Rev.2, were noted. The tables containing the provisional monthly catch statistics for 2019 up to and including September, as presented in document AM 2019-55, were also noted.

7.2 The Secretariat also presented the annual overview of bottom fishing in the Regulatory Area, document AM 2019-52. While the document included the maps of bottom fishing activities as in
previous years, the new NEAFC Monitoring Control and Surveillance Officer presented some additional graphical analysis of bottom fishing activity in the Regulatory Area. This analysis highlighted the patterns of deep-sea fish catches, notified gear codes and bottom fishing warnings (mostly false positives) in the Regulatory Area.

7.3 An NGO observer noted the usefulness of the new analysis including the fact that the data showed that bottom fisheries regulations were being monitored and enforced.

8 Report from the Permanent Committee on Management and Science, PECMAS

8.1 The acting PECMAS Chair, Thorsteinn Sigurdsson, presented the Committee’s work. He explained that the former PECMAS Chair, Evgeny Shamray, Russian Federation, had left his post with the Government and therefore had been unable to continue in his role. He noted that PECMAS had held one meeting in 2019.

8.2 The acting Chair explained that in addition to its normal consideration of scientific advice on the NEAFC stocks, PECMAS had considered two important additional items: that of the update to the ICES-NEAFC Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and; the review of Recommendation 19:2014 on the protection of Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems (see Agenda item 9).

8.3 On the ICES-NEAFC MOU the acting Chair explained that the MOU had not been updated since 2007. The proposed draft update to the MOU (AM 2019-37) did not change any fundamental aspects of the relationship with ICES, but reflected the already implemented practice over the last years, evolution of documentation on both sides, and improved harmonisation with MOUs evolving with NEAFC Contracting Parties.

8.4 PECMAS had noted the 5-year experience with observers at its meetings had been positive and their contribution was valued. It nevertheless indicated that the NEAFC Rules of Procedure (Chapter 7) that enabled closed sessions of PECMAS should continue, even if this had not been used so far.

8.5 PECMAS held a second meeting (reported under AM 2019-98) in the margins of the Annual Meeting. This meeting finalised the ICES-NEAFC MOU (AM 2019-37 Rev.1) and developed Recommendations on deep sea sharks, rays and chimaeras (in response to a Norwegian proposal for guidance to PECMAS - document AM 2019-42). In addition, PECMAS (2) responded to an ICES request for guidance on how the Total Allowable Catch advice could be split between the two components of the Roundnose grenadier stock in ICES divisions 6, 7, 12.b and 5.b. PECMAS agreed to request ICES to treat Roundnose grenadiers in the area to be one stock and provide the 2020 advice accordingly. PECMAS also noted a paper from Norway proposing ICES assessments of the status of the marine ecosystem in the NEAFC portion of the high seas of the Central Arctic Ocean (document AM 2019-44, tabled under agenda item 11).

8.6 PECMAS (2) elected Karin Linderholm (European Union) as its new Chair, with Thorsteinn Sigurdsson continuing as vice-Chair.

8.7 The Annual Meeting noted the reports of the two PECMAS meetings and thanked the Russian Federation for Evgeny Shamray’s tenure as Chair. The revised MOU, as in AM 2019-37 Rev.1, was adopted, the President noting that NEAFC will naturally take into account issues of NEAFC competence when making its requests to ICES.

9.1 The acting Chair of PECMAS introduced the 5-yearly review of the effectiveness of the Recommendation 19:2014 on protection of Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems (VMEs) in the NEAFC Regulatory Area as required by the Recommendation itself. PECMAS had considered evidence from a Secretariat paper, ICES advice and PECMAC 2019 (2) discussions. The acting Chair noted that while PECMAS had considered that the information presented to it indicated the Recommendation was effective in its aim to protect VMEs from bottom fisheries, as well as areas outside defined existing fishing areas in the Regulatory Area, nevertheless performance could be improved. The acting Chair briefly set out the 10 actions proposed by PECMAS to improve performance. Norway was then invited to introduce its paper (AM 2019-43) which had taken the same PECMAS actions but repackaged them more clearly as actions for PECMAC, PECMAS and for the Secretariat of NEAFC.

9.2 The Contracting Parties welcomed the work by PECMAS and the repackaged proposals by Norway. An NGO also noted they were happy with the review carried out by PECMAS, but nevertheless suggested improvements in ensuring ICES gave advice on all likely VMEs and also on the need to look again at the possibility of closing all seamounts currently open to bottom fisheries.


10  **Report by the Advisory Committee of ICES**

10.1 Mark Dickey-Collas, the Chair of the Advisory Committee of ICES (ACOM), presented document AM 2019-78, the report of the Advisory Committee. The report explained the advice process including the framework for advice, MSY, stock categorisation and dealing with data deficiency, management strategies, the precautionary approach and ecosystem overviews. The ACOM Chair also informed NEAFC about the ICES Advisory plan 2019, and the forthcoming ecosystem overview for the ‘Oceanic North East Atlantic’.

10.2 The Annual Meeting thanked the ACOM Chair for a clear presentation.

11  **Request for scientific advice.**

11.1 The acting PECMAS Chair noted that members of PECMAS had met in the margins of the meeting and made some amendments to the request to ICES for scientific advice for 2020 as set out in AM 2019-96. The request was in line with the previous year but had integrated a proposal presented by Norway (AM 2019-44) which was to request to ICES to provide assessments of the status of the marine ecosystem in a portion of the high seas of the Central Arctic Ocean.

11.2 It was agreed to send the amended request for advice for 2020 to ICES, on the basis of document AM 2019-96. However, in view of the newly updated ICES-NEAFC MOU, the Secretariats of NEAFC and ICES were requested to convert the text of the request into the new format as required.
11.3 Noting the interest for the Agreement to Prevent Unregulated High Seas Fisheries in the Central Arctic Ocean (the CAO Agreement), the Secretariat was also requested to inform the relevant contact at the CAO Agreement about the request for ICES advice.

12 Scientific advice and management measures

12.1 Pelagic Sebastes mentella in the Irminger Sea
   12.1.1 Report by the Advisory Committee of ICES
   12.1.2 Relevant reports
   12.1.3 Recommendations on management measures

12.1 Mark Dickey-Collas, the Chair of ACOM, presented the ICES advice for Sebastes mentella in the Irminger Sea (AM 2019-79). It was noted that surveys were limited and uncertainty continued to be problematic. Nevertheless, in view of declining catches and advice that recovery would be slow, the advice was for zero catch for 2020 and 2021.

12.2 In discussion, the poor state of the stock was noted by some Contracting Parties while another Contracting Party stated that their calculations indicated an increase in stock biomass in recent years. On the issue of evidence, the ACOM Chair requested that Contracting Parties could usefully provide catch depth information to assist the assessments.

12.3 Iceland tabled its proposals in document AM 2019-38, noting that only three Contracting Parties had been present at the relevant coastal States meeting on 18 October 2019. Its proposal for conservation and management measures for deep and shallow redfish in the Irminger Sea was for zero catch in the years 2020 and 2021.

12.4 The Russian Federation tabled a statement on the stock in the Irminger Sea in document AM 2019-75 along with a proposal for a joint survey in 2020 with other Contracting Parties to assess Sebastes mentella in the Irminger Sea, referring to the need for an improved methodology to be used for the assessment of the stock (document AM 2019-74).

12.5 Following discussions in the margins of the meeting, an alternative proposal from Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) and the European Union was presented (document AM 2019-97). The European Union explained the aim of the proposal was, as an interim measure, to maintain a limited level of activity in the area to make sure surveys and data continued to come in on the stock. The proposed catch was 5,500 tonnes for 2020, alongside detailed reporting, scientific, technical and inspection requirements.

12.6 There was no consensus on the proposals. Both proposals were therefore put to a vote, in the order that they had been tabled.

12.7 The Icelandic proposal (document AM 2018-38) received two votes in favour (Iceland and Norway) and three votes against. It was therefore not adopted.

12.8 The proposal by Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) and the European Union, (document AM 2019-97), received three votes in favour (Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland), the European Union and Norway) and two votes against (Iceland and the Russian Federation). It was therefore not adopted.
12.2 Pelagic Sebastes mentella in ICES Sub-areas 1 and 2 in the Regulatory Area

12.2.1 Report by the Advisory Committee of ICES
12.2.2 Relevant reports
12.2.3 Recommendations on management measures

12.9 Mark Dickey-Collas, the Chair of ACOM, presented the ICES advice (document AM 2019-80), based on its 2018 document. This advised a catch not exceeding 5,860 tonnes for 2020, noting this was applying one of the highest F value (0.06) that was found to be precautionary.

12.10 No consultations on the management of Sebastes mentella in the NEAFC Regulatory Area of ICES Sub-areas 1 and 2 had been held prior to the Annual Meeting. Two proposals for conservation and management measures for 2020 were presented.

12.11 The European Union made its proposal based on its proposal in the previous year (the ICES advice in 2018 having covered both 2019 and 2020). The proposal (document AM 2019-60) received one vote in favour (European Union), two votes against (Norway and the Russian Federation) and two abstentions (Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) and Iceland). It was therefore not adopted.

12.12 The Norway and Russian Federation proposal (document AM 2019-65) received two votes in favour (Norway and Russian Federation), two votes against (Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) and the European Union) and one abstention (Iceland). It was therefore not adopted.

12.3 Blue whiting

12.3.1 Report by the Advisory Committee of ICES
12.3.2 Relevant reports
12.3.3 Recommendations on management measures

12.13 Mark Dickey-Collas, the Chair of ACOM, presented the ICES advice on blue whiting (document AM 2019-81). It was explained that the stock generally responded dramatically to wider changes in the ocean, noting in particular poor year classes in recent years. The Chair of ACOM noted that the application of the long-term management plan had not taken into account deviations from the plan evident from the sum of unilateral quotas.

12.14 It was noted that coastal States consultations had resulted in an agreement on a total allowable catch according to the Long Term Management Plan and ICES advice, however no sharing arrangement had been agreed. Iceland made a proposal for the management of the stock in 2020 (document AM 2019-30 Rev.2) reflecting the agreement at the coastal States meeting. In doing so Iceland reminded ICES that notwithstanding the failures to reach comprehensive management measures on allocations at the coastal State level, it would want to see the advice to continue as purely based on the underlying science, rather than ICES being tempted to build in elements related to management implementation.

12.15 The proposal for conservation and management measures for blue whiting for 2020 was adopted by consensus. It was noted that these measures were not fully comprehensive, as they did not include allocation among the Contracting Parties.

12.4 Norwegian spring spawning (Atlanto-Scandian) herring

12.4.1 Report by the Advisory Committee of ICES
12.4.2 Relevant reports
12.4.3  Recommendations on management measures

12.16  Mark Dickey-Collas, the Chair of ACOM, presented the ICES advice based on the Long-Term Management Strategy agreed by coastal States (document AM 2019-82). He noted the trends in F over the years, and the fact that a big year class was approaching.

12.17  Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) reported on the negotiations at the October coastal States meeting, noting a reduction of total allowable catch given the scientific advice. In light of the coastal States agreement on total catch for Norwegian spring spawning (Atlanto-Scandian) herring, based on the long term management strategy and ICES advice, Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) proposed a recommendation (document AM 2019-51 Rev.1).

12.18  The proposal for conservation and management measures for Norwegian spring spawning (Atlanto-Scandian) herring for 2020 was adopted by consensus. It was noted that these measures were not fully comprehensive, as they did not include allocation among the Contracting Parties.

12.5  Mackeral

12.5.1  Report by the Advisory Committee of ICES
12.5.2  Relevant reports
12.5.3  Recommendations on management measures

12.19  Mark Dickey-Collas, the Chair of ACOM, made a presentation of the ICES advice on Mackeral (document AM 2019-83). He noted that in recent years there had been corrections to the advice. A spring 2019 inter-benchmark meeting had led to a revision in advice, but uncertainties remained. A workshop on research needs for advice for mackerel fisheries in ICES had identified 9 actions to improve the advice.

12.20  The European Union noted the two coastal State meetings were held earlier in the year. It proposed a Recommendation with a capped figure for fisheries in the Regulatory Area, and noted its desire to amend the Recommendation with a March notification date for management measures (document AM 2019-59). Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) proposed document AM 2019-99 Rev.1 on a recommendation on mackerel.

12.21  The European Union proposal (document AM 2019-59) received one vote in favour (European Union), with all other Contracting Parties voting against. It was therefore not adopted.

12.22  The proposal by Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) (document AM 2019-99 Rev.1) received four votes in favour, with the European Union abstaining. The proposal for conservation and management measures for mackerel for 2020 (document AM 2019-99 Rev.1) was therefore adopted. It was noted that these measures were not fully comprehensive, as they did not include allocation among the Contracting Parties.

12.6  Rockall haddock

12.6.1  Report by the Advisory Committee of ICES
12.6.2  Relevant reports
12.6.3  Recommendations on management measures

12.23  Mark Dickey-Collas, the Chair of ACOM, made a presentation of the ICES advice on Rockall haddock. He explained that there had been a benchmark and an evaluation of the long-term management plan (but not yet adopted) in 2019. The catch advice represented an increase on that of the year before but remained precautionary.
12.24 The European Union proposed a recommendation (document AM 2019-61) on Rockall haddock.

12.25 The proposal for conservation and management measures for Rockall haddock for 2020 was adopted by consensus.

12.7 Deep-sea fisheries
12.7.1 Report by the Advisory Committee of ICES
12.7.2 Relevant reports
12.7.3 Recommendations on management measures

12.26 Mark Dickey-Collas, the Chair of ACOM, made a presentation of the ICES advice on Deep-Sea Stocks document AM 2019-85. The advice included specific advice on roundnose grenadier, blue ling and tusk, as well as reiterating earlier (2016) advice on orange roughy. The advices for blue ling, tusk and orange roughy remained as zero catch. The Chair also noted that assessments had been carried out on another 14 deep-sea stocks in 2019. The presentation also included a request from ICES on guidance from NEAFC on the current split in advice applied to the grenadier stock in the NEAFC Regulatory Area on Hatton Bank and Rockall.

12.27 The Contracting Parties noted the advice on deep-sea stocks and the request on guidance on the Grenadier stock. Subsequent discussion at PECMAS (2) had agreed that it was content that ICES would provide only one figure in 2020 with regards to total allowable catch for Roundnose grenadier in ICES divisions 6, 7, 12.b and 5.b (see document AM 2019-98).

12.28 Norway tabled proposals for grenadiers in the Hatton Bank and Rockall (document AM 2019-45 Rev.1) and the mid-Atlantic ridge (document AM 2019-46) based on proposals in previous years. Norway explained the revision to the Hatton Bank and Rockall proposal reflected the proposed approach not to divide the total catch between the two subdivisions within the area as well as taking into account the proportion of catches in the Regulatory Area and EEZ. The European Union explained it was not in a position to support the proposals given it had measures for the stocks internal to the European Union and would like these to be taken into account.

12.29 The proposal by Norway (document AM 2019-45 Rev.1), received four votes in favour and one abstention (the European Union). The proposal for conservation and management measures for grenadiers in the Hatton Bank and Rockall for 2020 was thereby adopted.

12.30 The proposal by Norway (document AM 2019-46), received four votes in favour and one abstention (the European Union). The proposal for conservation and management measures for grenadiers in the mid-Atlantic ridge for 2020 was thereby adopted.

12.8 Area management
12.8.1 Report by the Advisory Committee of ICES
12.8.2 Relevant reports
12.8.3 Recommendations on management measures

12.31 Mark Dickey-Collas, the Chair of ACOM, presented the ICES advice on VMEs in the NEAFC Regulatory Area (document AM 2019-87). ICES had noted limited areas of fishing near the closed haddock box, with minor incursions. Closures were well observed but with limited potential indications of activity in areas where exploratory fisheries were required (i.e. outside established fishing areas). The advice proposed no changes in current VME closures. In addition to the advice, ICES presented a summary of the substantial progress on VME habitat protection in the NEAFC Regulatory Area over the period 2008 to 2018 (document AM 2019-86).
12.32 In discussion, the acting Chair of PECMAS reminded ICES that NEAFC at AM 2018 had requested that advice pertinent to NEAFC’s recommendation 19:2014 should also consider subareas of the Regulatory Area that are closed to fishing for other purposes than VME protection, e.g. the haddock box at Rockall. This was to supplement the existing advice which had informed the closure based on juvenile haddock.

12.33 Norway explained that some of the indications of bottom fisheries activity outside existing areas could be related to changes to the borders of Norwegian and Russian Federation national waters and international waters under the bilateral delimitation treaty between the two countries. Iceland thanked Norway for the information and hoped further clarification may be provided at the next PECMAS meeting.

12.9 Other
12.9.1 Report by the Advisory Committee of ICES
12.9.2 Relevant reports
12.9.3 Recommendations on management measures

12.34 Mark Dickey-Collas, the Chair of ACOM, presented an overview of other stocks in the Convention Area (document AM 2019-88). Additionally, the ACOM Chair provided zero catch advice on porbeagle (new information due in 2021 or 2022), basking shark (high conservation status) and some deep sea sharks, he also noted there was no advice on the deep sea rays or chimaeras.

12.35 The European Union presented document (document AM 2019-62), extending the current ban on targeted fisheries for porbeagle. The proposal for conservation and management measures for porbeagle for 2020 to 2023 was adopted by consensus.

12.36 The European Union presented document (document AM 2019-63), extending the current ban on targeted fisheries for basking shark. The proposal for conservation and management measures for basking shark for 2020 to 2023 was adopted by consensus.

12.37 PECMAS presented document (document AM 2019-90), extending the current ban on targeted fisheries for deep chimaeras. The proposal for conservation and management measures for deep sea chimaeras for 2020 to 2023 was adopted by consensus.

12.38 PECMAS presented document (document AM 2019-91), extending the current ban on targeted fisheries for deep sea sharks. The proposal for conservation and management measures for deep sea sharks for 2020 to 2023 was adopted by consensus.

12.39 PECMAS presented document (document AM 2019-92), extending the current ban on targeted fisheries for deep sea rays. The proposal for conservation and management measures for deep sea rays for 2020 to 2023 was adopted by consensus.

12.40 Norway and the Russian Federation tabled a proposal (document AM 2019-64) to prohibit the use of collecting bags with shrimp trawl sorting grids under Recommendation 11:2015. Norway explained, as it had repeated in earlier years, it was concerned by the potential bycatch of non-target regulated fish and juveniles when using a collecting bag in shrimp fisheries, thus undermining the aim of the NEAFC recommendation on sorting grids. Norway noted that Norway and the Russian Federation banned such collecting bags in their national waters. Another Contracting Party did not consider the document was sufficiently well evidenced to make a decision, but said it would consider any information or proposals of joint research on impacts on the sustainability of the relevant stocks. After further
discussions between the Contracting Parties and following a vote, the proposal did not receive enough support to be adopted.

### 13 Report from the Permanent Committee on Monitoring and Compliance, PECMAC

13.1 The Chair of PECMAC, Thord Monsen, Norway, presented the Committee’s work. He noted that PECMAC had held two meetings prior to the Annual Meeting. The reports from the meetings of the Committee (documents AM 2019-05 and AM 2019-24) along with a report of a third meeting held in the margins of the Annual Meeting (document AM 2019-102) and the Chair’s summary (document AM 2019-40) were noted. Most items discussed at the above meetings would be discussed in the subsequent Annual Meeting agenda items, however the Chair also noted the PECMAC agreement to set up an Ad Hoc Working Group to prepare a first draft of a Flag State Performance Review summary before the first PECMAC meeting next year. The Vice Chair of PECMAC, Mindaugas Kisieliauskas (European Union) would be chairing this working group. On applications for Cooperating non-Contracting Party (CNCP) status in 2020 PECMAC had not come to any consensus. The Chair noted that the reports for 2018 and applications from CNCPs had not been entirely clear. PECMAC would therefore consider next year further what information should be required from CNCPs and the terms that they should be assessed against. PECMAC also sought further guidance from the Commission on an appropriate status for those CNCP applicants which had no intention to carry out fisheries activities in the Regulatory Area.

#### NEAFC Electronic Reporting Scheme

13.2 On the Electronic Reporting System, the PECMAC Chair reminded Contracting Parties that at the last Annual Meeting the Commission adopted (Recommendation 19:2019) *Introducing an Electronic Reporting System in NEAFC* setting out a new NEAFC Scheme of Control and Enforcement to facilitate the implementation of ERS, based on the FLUX UN/CEFACT Standard (AM 2018-98 Annex I and AM 2018-98 Annex II). The Annual Meeting also adopted amendments to the current Scheme (AM 2018-98 Annex III) that would apply during the transition period. The Annual Meeting had also agreed to establish an ERS Implementation Group organised under PECMAC to resolve any remaining issues and finalise technical documentation. This Ad Hoc Working Group had met seven times and the most recent ERS Implementation Group report was included as a meeting document (AM 2019-31).

13.3 The Chair explained there were 3 documents on ERS in particular that were significant; AM 2019-33, a FLUX fishing activities implementation document; AM 2019-34, a FLUX fishing vessel position implementation document; and a document AM 2019-35 on criteria for completion of technical preparations (see below). One element agreed at ERS Implementation Group had been the understanding of the level playing field concept for the transition period. Fall-back procedures were also to be considered under a European Union document AM 2019-54 (later adopted by PECMAC 3).

13.4 The two FLUX implementation documents would be considered under item 15 as Scheme amendments as these would fall under Annex IX of the amendments to the Scheme already adopted under Recommendation 19:2019. The Chair pointed out, however, that the ERS FLUX Fishing Activities Implementation Document version 1.1 (AM 2019-33) did not completely fulfil the adopted requirements in the new Scheme outlined in Annex II of document AM 2018-98 (REC 19 2019). Therefore, the ERS Implementation Group would continue the development of version 2.0 of the ERS FLUX Implementation document. The Group had identified a number of additional improvements that should be covered by version 2.0 and two of the Contracting Parties had stated that they would not implement ERS FLUX before version 2.0 was ready.
13.5 The Chair introduced document AM 2019-35, detailing the set of criteria to be used when assessing whether the technical preparations for the adoption of the FLUX standard were completed. The agreed framework implied that when the ERS Implementation Group received the documentation listed in the Criteria confirming that implementation and testing have been sufficiently completed with positive results, the test would be considered finalised and thereafter the ERS Implementation Group would be able to give their advice to the Commission. Following the advice from the ERS Implementation Group and confirmation of an implementation date from the European Union, the Commission would decide, by written procedure if appropriate, on the implementation date of the ERS. This date would be the start date of the two year transition period.

13.6 In discussion, Contracting Parties thanked PECMAC and the ERS Implementation Group for their work in developing the documents to keep the ERS project moving forward. Minor changes were made to the documents by PECMAC 3 to enable adoption under agenda item 15.

13.7 The FAO thanked the PECMAC Chair for the encouraging progress at NEAFC and its support to developments at the FAO. FAO also highlighted progress on the Port States Measures Agreement, the Global Record of fishing vessels and a proposed Global Electronic Information System for the PSMA.

13.8 The Annual Meeting adopted the Criteria as set out in document AM 2019-35.

The NEAFC Compliance Report 2018

13.9 The Chair presented the PECMAC annual compliance report, (AM 2019-41 Rev.1) which included trends on infringements. He noted that in 2018 a total of 665 vessels were notified by Contracting Parties to operate in the Regulatory Area. This was the lowest number of vessels since 2014.

13.10 Contracting Parties thanked the Chair for the report. Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) noted that action had been taken to improve controls on refrigerated landings. The European Union invited the Russian Federation to look at the issue of inspection presence in the Regulatory Area consistent with the Scheme.

The Compliance report for 2018 was adopted by consensus.

14 Report from the Joint Advisory Group on Data Management, JAGDM

14.1 The Chair of JAGDM, Leifur Magnusson, Iceland, presented the report of the group’s work. He explained that JAGDM had held three meetings in 2019, with the report of the third JAGDM as a meeting document (AM 2019-32). The group had reviewed Application Penetration Testing of the NEAFCs Port-state control system, looked at VMS positions and privacy, and the potential for an e-PSC system under NAFO. To meet vessel public listing requirements JAGDM had considered the ISMS and improvements to vessel identifiers in the NEAFC database. JAGDM had also addressed matters arising from the creation of a Master Species list for use in all applications in NEAFC. Much of the JAGDM work had been related to supporting technical aspects of the ERS. This included addressing advice from the service provider on duplicate checking, which was adopted as a task for development of Version 2 of the ERS.

14.2 The meeting thanked the Chair of JAGDM for his report and the work of the group.
15 The NEAFC Scheme of Control and Enforcement

15.1 Implementation of the Scheme

15.1 The PECMAC Chair referred to his report from PECMAC and the Compliance Report, including on implementation of the Port State Controls.

15.2 Under this item Norway tabled document AM 2019-47 Rev.1 highlighting its views on ensuring that CNCP applications contained the relevant information to demonstrate their ability to comply with flag State and port State obligations. In addition, it considered examination was required of the appropriate status for a CNCP applicant that was not seeking to carry out activities in the Regulatory Area. Norway suggested that PECMAC (and potentially the Future of NEAFC Working Group) could look at the issues.

15.3 In discussion, the Contracting Parties welcomed Norway's suggestions.

15.4 The Commission agreed to request PECMAC to define what kind of information applicants should provide in accordance with Article 34 of the Scheme, including considering transhipment regulations. PECMAC was requested to make proposals to the Annual Meeting in 2020 based on these considerations, as appropriate.

15.5 The Commission also requested the Working Group on the Future of NEAFC to evaluate the system of granting CNCP status, and inform PECMAC and the Annual Meeting in 2020 of its findings, as appropriate.

15.2 Possible adoption of proposals from PECMAC

15.6 The following proposals were presented by the Chair of PECMAC:

15.7 It was agreed to add species to the species list in Annex V of the NEAFC Scheme of Control and Enforcement, as presented in document AM 2019-17 Rev.1.

15.8 It was agreed to amend Article 5 of the NEAFC Scheme of Control and Enforcement in order to make lists of notified and authorised vessels publicly available on the NEAFC website, as presented in document AM 2019-19 Rev.1.

15.9 It was agreed to amend Article 27 and Annex XVI of the NEAFC Scheme of Control and Enforcement to allow a Master’s representative to sign inspection reports, as presented in document AM 2019-20 Rev.1.

15.10 It was agreed to modify Article 44 of the NEAFC Scheme of Control and Enforcement in respect of publication of vessels listed as IUU by other RFMOs, as presented in document AM 2019-21 Rev.2.

15.11 It was agreed to introduce amend Annex VIII 7) of the NEAFC Scheme of Control and Enforcement to harmonise wording (with NAFO) of the CANCEL Report, as presented in document AM 2019-22 Rev.1.

15.12 It was agreed to amend Annex IX C1) of the NEAFC Scheme of Control and Enforcement to update the Internal Registration Numbers (IR) Format, as presented in document AM 2019-23 Rev.1.

15.13 It was agreed to introduce the FLUX Fishing Activities Implementation Document for NEAFC – V 1.1 to Annex IX of the NEAFC Scheme of Control and Enforcement, as presented in document AM 2019-33 Rev.2.
15.14 In adopting the Recommendation the Russian Federation stated that it may take it a three-year, rather than two-year, transition period to implement the required changes to its systems.

15.15 **It was agreed** to introduce the FLUX Vessel Position Implementation Document for NEAFC based on EU Implementation version 2.1 to Annex IX of the NEAFC Scheme of Control and Enforcement, as presented in document AM 2019-34 Rev.2.

15.16 **It was agreed** to amend articles 7a and 7b of the NEAFC Scheme of Control and Enforcement relating to abandoned, lost or otherwise discarded fishing gear (ALDFG) to cover all fishing gears not just fixed gears, as presented in document AM 2019-48 Rev.3.

15.17 **It was agreed** to amend Article 14 of the new NEAFC Scheme of Control and Enforcement, which was adopted as annex 1 and 2 to document AM 2018-98 at the Annual Meeting in 2018. The amendments agreed to Article 14 related to a fall back procedure for masters of fishing vessels in case of technical failures of an electronic reporting system, as presented in document AM 2019-54 Rev.1.

15.3 **Possible adoption of proposals from JAGDM**

15.18 Reflecting the agreement to amend Article 5 of the Scheme to make lists of notified and authorised vessels publicly available on the NEAFC website, (AM 2019-19 Rev.1) JAGDM proposed a corresponding update to the ISMS Article 7.2 (Data Classification) AM 2019-53.

15.19 The proposal to update the ISMS as presented in document AM 2019-53 was adopted by consensus.

15.4 **A and B- lists of IUU vessels**

15.20 **It was agreed** to adopt the IUU B list of confirmed IUU vessels, as presented in document AM 2019-10. It was noted that no vessel had been added to or removed from the NEAFC IUU B list in the previous year. It was further noted that there were no vessels on the IUU A list. The European Union indicated it would like to return to the list at the first PECMAC meeting of 2020.

15.5 **Other**

Note: Two proposals originally proposed under this item were adopted as proposals by PECMAC (3) and adopted under item 15.2. There were no other proposals.

16 **Cooperating non-Contracting Party Status**

16.1 **Possible renewal of cooperating non-Contracting Party status**

16.1 As explained by the PECMAC Chair earlier, no application for renewal of the Cooperating non-Contracting Party (CNCP) status for 2020 had been agreed by consensus at PECMAC. The individual applications for renewal from Bahamas, Canada, Curaçao, Liberia, New Zealand and Panama would therefore go to a vote.

16.2 The proposal to renew the status for Bahamas was put to a vote; All Contracting Parties voted in favour. **It was therefore agreed to renew the cooperating non-Contracting Party status of Bahamas for 2020.**

16.3 The proposal to renew the status for Canada was put to a vote; All Contracting Parties voted in favour. **It was therefore agreed to renew the cooperating non-Contracting Party status of Canada for 2020.**
16.4 The proposal to renew the status for Curaçao was put to a vote; Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) and the Russian Federation voted in favour, the European Union, Iceland and Norway abstained from voting. It was therefore agreed to renew the cooperating non-Contracting Party status of Curaçao for 2020.

16.5 The proposal to renew the status for Liberia was put to a vote; Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland), the European Union, Norway and the Russian Federation voted against, while Iceland abstained from voting. Therefore the cooperating non-Contracting Party status of Liberia was not agreed to be renewed for 2020.

16.6 The proposal to renew the status for New Zealand was put to a vote; All Contracting Parties voted in favour. It was therefore agreed to renew the cooperating non-Contracting Party status of New Zealand for 2020.

16.7 The proposal to renew the status for Panama was put to a vote; Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) and the Russian Federation voted in favour, the European Union voted against and Iceland and Norway abstained from voting. It was therefore agreed to renew the cooperating non-Contracting Party status of Panama for 2020.

16.2 Possible new granting of cooperating non-Contracting Party status.

16.8 No applications had been received in 2019 for new grants of cooperating non-Contracting Party status for 2020.

17 Report from the Chair of the Working Group on Allocation Criteria

17.1 The Chair of the Working Group on Allocation Criteria explained that his group had been put on hold following the 2017 Annual Meeting. Following consultations with other members of the Working Group he had no new developments to report.

17.2 Iceland expressed its view that the practice in NEAFC had been to put Working Groups on hold rather than closing them down altogether. Its preference was that where a Working Group was no longer meeting it should be closed. A new Working Group could be re-established should a topic become ‘live’ again. Other Contracting Parties concurred with this view, although all felt that solving allocation was an important issue.

17.3 In conclusion the Annual Meeting thanked the Chair for his work and agreed to discontinue the Working Group on Allocation Criteria until an opportunity or need arose to establish a new group.

18 Report from the Working Group on Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems

18.1 The Chair of the NEAFC Working Group on Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems briefly updated the Annual Meeting on the work of the group in examining Recommendation 19:2014 in the light of coastal States’ rights on continental shelves under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. The Chair explained that the Working Group had held one meeting in the last year (document AM 2019-28). At the last meeting some progress was made on an informal working document with some potential new drafting for Recommendation 19:2014. However, the meeting was unable to find consensus on the drafting to set out the balance in views on the legal competence of NEAFC and the rights of coastal States.
18.2 In discussion, Contracting Parties thanked the Chair and the Working Group for its work. It was noted that the experience had been useful in clarifying thinking and had helped in other wider negotiations. The Russian Federation noted that it would continue its work that was taking into account technical adjustments in respect to the Russian zone and international waters and might make a proposal in due course.

18.3 In conclusion the Annual Meeting thanked the Chair for his work and agreed to discontinue the Working Group on Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems.

19 Collective arrangement between competent international organisations

19.1 The Secretary reported back from the fourth meeting with OSPAR under the collective arrangement held in Gothenburg in 2019 (document AM 2019-27). The meeting, attended by other RFMO and Regional Seas Organisation Secretariats, had included useful discussion between the different perspectives of fisheries and environment represented at the meeting. Of note was cooperation on a marine litter survey by OSPAR, OSPAR work on Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures, and further input from NEAFC to a consultation by OSPAR on a proposal for a new high-seas Marine Protected Area focused on protection of seabirds. OSPAR was able to report back on further developments, including ICES advice on the scientific aspects of the MPA proposal.

19.2 The next meeting under the collective arrangement was kindly to be hosted by OSPAR at its UK Headquarters in spring 2020.

20 Relationships with other Regional Fisheries Management Organisations

20.1 Observer reports
20.1 The reports submitted by NEAFC observers at meetings of regional fisheries management organisations were noted as follows: CCAMLR (AM 2019-50), ICCAT 2019-57), ICES Annual Science Conference (AM 2019-29), NAFO (AM 2019-08), NAMMCO (AM 2019-06), NASCO (AM 2019-56), Pollock in the Bering Sea (AM 2019-36) and SEAFO (AM 2019-07).

20.2 It was agreed that the Contracting Parties would provide observer reports to the Annual Meeting in 2020 in the following way:

CCAMLR – Norway
ICCAT – the European Union
ICES – Iceland
NAFO – Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland)
NAMMCO – Norway
NASCO – the European Union
Pollock in the Bering Sea – the Russian Federation
SEAFO – Norway

20.2 Other
20.3 Under this item the President announced that NEAFC would be signing a Memorandum of Understanding with the General Fisheries Council of the Mediterranean.
21 Relationship with other international forums

21.1 The Secretariat presented its report on relationships with other international fora. The Secretariat explained that attendance by the Secretariat and President at such meetings offered the opportunity to highlight the work of NEAFC and its Contracting Parties on both fisheries and conservation. In addition, NEAFC had been able to share expertise and knowledge in particular on Monitoring Control and Surveillance. The Secretariat continued to aim to limit travel and recover the costs of attendance as far as possible. Document AM 2019-39 sets out reports under the following groupings:

21.2 Global and Regional Oceans Governance

Including UN, CBD and OSPAR conferences, workshops and meetings with interventions focused on highlighting the regional approach and NEAFC conservation measures and cross sectoral work.

21.3 Enforcement, Monitoring, Control and Surveillance

Including FAO, International Maritime Organization (IMO) and other global and regional workshops for training and information exchange on Monitoring, Control and Surveillance, as well as FAO meetings on Port States Measures.

21.4 Science and information sharing.

These meetings included a wide variety of FAO, ICES and RFMO meetings along with broader oceans and fishery conferences.

21.5 The Secretariat explained that it would continue to highlight NEAFC's role given the very high level of interest in global oceans governance, climate change, marine pollution and biodiversity evident currently. A priority continued to be working with the FAO and other regional fisheries management organisations and arrangements; consistent with the conclusions of the Commission in previous years. Where possible the direct cost of Secretariat attendance at meetings would be met by the organisers of the meeting/project and the Secretariat continued to turn down many requests for attendance at meetings if these did not meet NEAFC priorities.

21.6 Contracting Parties thanked the President and the Secretariat for an excellent job in attendance at forums covering a wide range of issues, where it was important to highlight all aspects of NEAFC’s work, including on sustainable food. It was also noted that was useful to have technical cooperation not only to illustrate improvements at NEAFC but also to learn what was happening in technical developments elsewhere.

21.7 The FAO provided more detail on the Common Oceans Programme/Deep Seas Project, explaining that the Programme was in its last year, setting out the detail of the products from the project. The FAO then explained that the programme was planning a second phase after the close of the current activities and hoped that NEAFC would again be involved in the new work.

21.8 The FAO also highlighted the very useful and valued input of NEAFC into FAO working groups and other meetings, for instance on the Global Record and the Port States Measures Agreement. The FAO invited Contracting Parties to encourage other RFMOs to which they were party to attend such meetings in the same way as NEAFC had been doing.

21.9 The IMO representative noted that NEAFC was the only RFMO with an agreement with the IMO. He underlined the importance of the 2012 Cape Town Agreement on safety of fishing vessels and IUU fishing and was happy to note NEAFC attendance at the recent related meeting in Torremolinos. He
reminded Contracting Parties that the Agreement was open for ratification and invited all countries to become parties of the Agreement.

22 Report from the Finance and Administration Committee

22.1 The Chair of the Finance and Administration Committee (FAC), Áki Johansen, Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland), presented the Committee’s work. He noted that the Committee had met in the margins of the current Annual Meeting. He explained the details of the Committee’s report, document AM 2019-100, including the healthy status of the General Fund and the continued requirements related to the implementation of the ERS. The re-appointment of auditors Nexia Smith Williamson was recommended and the position related to repayments from the Kaupthing Singer and Friedlander bank account were noted. The document AM 2018-100 was noted.

22.2 In discussion, the European Union suggested that the decision that came before the FAC each year regarding an Audit Committee may need looking at next year to see whether this should indeed continue as an annual consideration.

22.3 The meeting:

1. **Noted** the Audited accounts for the year ending 31 December 2018 and preliminary statements for 2019.
2. **Agreed** the Draft budget for 2020 and draft budget estimate for 2021.
3. **Agreed** to apply Article 17.4c of the Convention with reference to annual contributions from Contracting Parties.
4. **Agreed** that the FAC should reconvene if necessary if there is an Extraordinary Meeting of NEAFC during 2020.
5. **Noted** that Contracting Party contributions should be paid in full no later than 1 April 2020.

22.4 The President thanked the Committee, the Chair and the Secretariat for their excellent work.

23 Arrangements for future meetings

23.1 Annual Meetings 10-13 November 2020 and 9-12 November 2021

23.1 It was noted that NEAFC Annual Meetings were traditionally held during the second full week of November. Therefore the 39th Annual Meeting would take place on 10-13 November 2020 and the 40th Annual Meeting would take place 9-12 November 2021.

23.2 Arrangements were being made to hold the Annual Meeting in 2020 at the Holiday Inn London Regents Park Hotel, Carburton Street, London, W1W 5EE.

23.2 Meetings of subsidiary bodies of NEAFC

23.3 It was agreed that the timing of meetings of subsidiary bodies of NEAFC in 2020 would be as presented in the calendar in document AM 2019-101, although some changes could still be made in consultation between the President, the Heads of Delegation and the relevant committee and working group Chairs. It was noted in particular that the next year’s Annual Meeting would continue with the pattern of 4 days duration, starting on Tuesday 10 November, with a Heads of Delegation meeting on Monday afternoon, 9 November 2020. The date of the meeting under the Collective Arrangement was yet to be finalised.
24 Press statements and other reports of NEAFC’s activities

24.1 It was agreed that the press statement from the meeting would be dealt with by the President and that the Secretary would support him in that task.

25 Access to documents

25.1 Under the NEAFC policy on access to documents from NEAFC meetings, Contracting Parties were invited to indicate any document as needing to be marked as an exception from the policy. No documents were proposed.

26 Any other business

Proposal by Norway to amend the Terms of Reference for the Working Group on the Future of NEAFC

26.1 Norway introduced its proposal (AM 2019-09) to amend the Terms of Reference for the Working Group on the Future of NEAFC (WG FUTURE). Norway noted that the Working Group had been originally set up in 1996 and included in its early work the development of the NEAFC Scheme. It had not met since 2013. Norway went on to set out the many developments on ocean governance ongoing internationally, amongst others, including the UN General Assembly Resolution, the ‘BBNJ’ negotiations, the UN Fish Stocks Agreement Review meeting and meetings under the auspices of the FAO. Norway therefore proposed the WG FUTURE to be revitalised with amended Terms of Reference to identify challenges and relevant international developments and allow discussions on how to respond to these. This would then allow the Annual Meeting to engage with the relevant issues.

26.2 In discussion, Contracting Parties noted the earlier decisions to close 2 dormant working groups and not create unnecessary bureaucracy, but also saw the rationale to revitalise the WG FUTURE to benefit from and respond to international developments. There was also a suggestion to include examination of outputs from future performance reviews.

26.3 In conclusion the Annual Meeting agreed to revitalise the Working Group on the Future of NEAFC with Terms of Reference as set out in (AM 2019-09 Rev.1) including reference to future performance reviews. It was agreed that the WG FUTURE would meet once a year until 2022, at which time the Annual Meeting of 2022 would review whether the Working Group should continue its work or not.

Proposal by Norway on transparency in NEAFC

26.4 Norway presented its proposal, as set out in AM 2019-49, to include in the consideration of the WG FUTURE consideration of observer participation under the NEAFC Rules of Procedure. This was proposed in light of the trends for increasing transparency, including that seen at other RFMOs.

26.5 The Annual Meeting agreed to add consideration of transparency as one of the tasks assigned by the Commission to the Future of NEAFC Working Group.

26.6 European Union Statement regarding the International Agreement to Prevent Unregulated High Seas Fisheries in the Central Arctic Ocean.
26.7 The European Union made a statement regarding the European Union’s contribution to the implementation of the International Agreement to Prevent Unregulated High Seas Fisheries in the Central Arctic Ocean, as set out in document AM 2019-95.

27 Closure of the 38th Annual Meeting

27.1 The President thanked all those from Committees, Working Groups and ICES for their contributions to the meeting as well as to all participants for a fruitful meeting.

27.2 He thanked the hotel staff and the Secretariat for their work throughout the meeting and in its preparation.

27.3 The President then closed the meeting and wished everyone a safe journey home.
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